

TRANSMITTAL SLIP	DATE 14 Feb 83
TO: NIO/USSR	

TRANSMITTAL SLIP	DATE 14 Feb 83
TO: NIO/SP	

TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE 14 Feb 83
TO:		C/ACIS
ROOM NO. 6F20	BUILDING Hqs.	
REMARKS:		
FYI		
FROM: Harry Rowen, C/NIC		
ROOM NO. 7F52	BUILDING Hqs.	
FROM: Harry Rowen, C/NIC		
ROOM NO. 7F52	BUILDING Hqs.	

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THE INSIDE STORY OF SALT II

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In the weeks after Vance's return from Moscow, the Carter administration underwent an agonizing reappraisal over whether to try, through further negotiation and compromise, to untie the knot or whether, through an outright American concession, to cut the string. Cyrus Vance was more convinced than ever that the U.S. position on cruise missile definition not only was dubious on its merits, but was contributing to Soviet inflexibility on the other outstanding issues, particularly encryption. Paul Warnke fully agreed with Vance—but Warnke was now out of the government, although he was still serving as a consultant to the administration on SALT. Vance, Warnke, Earle, Gelb and most other high officials of the Arms Control Agency and the State Department felt that Carter and Harold Brown should never have let Henry Jackson and Sam Nunn persuade them of the political importance of the issue to the European allies. "Cruise missile definition was important to NATO only insofar as we made it seem important by making such a big deal out of it in the negotiations," said an American diplomat who was instructed to reassure the West Euro-

peans that the U.S. would stand firm in protecting conventionally armed cruise missiles. "A fool is somebody who formulates a problem in such a way that he can't solve it except by backing down," said a State Department official. "And it was in just that sense that our definition of cruise missiles was foolish."

Zbigniew Brzezinski was having some second thoughts—indeed, third thoughts—about his own position on the issue. Originally, in 1977, he had worried about the difficulty of verifying a distinction between conventional and nuclear warheads on cruise missiles. Then he had come around to the Pentagon view that the verification of such a distinction was a Soviet problem, not an American one, because of the U.S. superiority in cruise missile technology. Having changed his mind once, he was now coming full circle to his original position: what if the Soviets developed long-range ALCMs more quickly than the intelligence community expected and deployed them on the Backfire bomber, claiming they were conventionally armed? Under the American definition, since the Backfire was to be treated in SALT as an aircraft other than a heavy bomber, Backfires armed with long-range conventional ALCMs could "run free" after the expiration of the protocol—and the U.S. would have little confidence that the ALCMs aboard those Backfires were really conventional. Walter Mondale was worried about the same thing. "Someday the Soviets will have a cruise missile and paint it with a big 'C' and load it on a Backfire," said the Vice-President, "and then where will we be? It's a distinction that can't be verified and therefore shouldn't be in the treaty."

In late November, Brzezinski and Mondale went to the President separately and argued that a concession would not only help move the negotiations along—it was also prudent, given the danger of the Soviets' using the U.S. provision to cheat. Harold Brown, the principal sponsor of the exemption for conventional ALCMs, reluctantly came around to the same conclusion. He, Brzezinski and Mondale consulted with Sam Nunn, who said he still felt it was important to protect all conventional cruise missiles from being constrained by SALT, but that his primary concern was with ground-launched and sea-launched cruise missiles. The Joint Chiefs made much the same point in a meeting with Carter. The Chiefs said they did not care so much about an agreed statement on conventional ALCMs per se as they did about the principle that SALT should not limit conventional weapons; they wanted assurances that the blanket prohibition contained in the protocol would not be treated as a precedent to be extended after the

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Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

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and firm in protecting conventionally armed somebody who formulates a problem and solve it except by backing down," said a man. "It was in just that sense that our definition was."

Having some second thoughts—indeed, a change of position on the issue. Originally, in the difficulty of verifying a distinction between warheads on cruise missiles. Then the Pentagon view that the verification of such a distinction was not an American one, because of the difficulty of verifying such technology. Having changed his mind, he returned to his original position: what would be the definition of ALCMs more quickly than the Backfire and deployed them on the Backfire? Conventionally armed? Under the American SALT as an arms control treaty, Backfires armed with long-range cruise missiles after the expiration of the protocol would have little confidence that the ALCMs would be conventional. Walter Mondale was asked today the Soviets will have a cruise missile and load it on a Backfire," said the man. "Will we be? It's a distinction that shouldn't be in the treaty."

Walter Mondale went to the President and said that it would not only help move the arms control process forward, given the danger of the Soviet Union. Harold Brown, the principal negotiator of ALCMs, reluctantly came to the conclusion that it was important to protect all cruise missiles constrained by SALT, but that the distinction between land-launched and sea-launched cruise missiles was much the same point in a meeting. He did not care so much about ALCMs per se as they did about the distinction between conventional weapons; they would like the prohibition contained in the protocol to be extended after the

expiration of the protocol. Carter responded, "That's not going to happen as long as I'm President." Since the press was full of speculation that Carter would be a one-term President—and since the protocol would not expire until well after the next presidential election—Carter's promise did not fully allay the Chiefs' misgivings, but it was the best he could offer. At a White House meeting at the end of November, Carter told Mondale, Vance, Brown, Brzezinski and Hamilton Jordan that he had decided once and for all to concede on the issue of cruise missile definition. He said he realized that in some respects he was damned if he did and damned if he didn't; if he stuck with the definition, he would be criticized on the grounds that it was not verifiable, and if he abandoned it, he would be criticized for "caving in" to the Soviets in their dogged effort to prevent the U.S. from reaping the benefits of a program in which it had a genuine and significant technological advantage. Carter said he would rather live with the latter criticism; the principle of verifiability was more important to defend than the appearance of hanging tough, and he now saw more merit in the argument that the cruise missile definition as originally proposed by the U.S. was unverifiable.

Shortly afterward, Vance met with Dobrynin and told him that the U.S. was prepared to withdraw its proposed exemption for conventionally armed cruise missiles on aircraft other than heavy bombers. The secretary of state made clear in that meeting, and in a series of follow-up meetings, that the administration hoped the Kremlin would reciprocate with some concessions of its own—particularly on a common understanding prohibiting the encryption of telemetry when it impeded verification, but also on a fractionation freeze for existing ICBMs and on the average number of ALCMs allowed aboard heavy bombers. Without committing his government to an explicit set of compromises, Dobrynin indicated that the next Vance-Gromyko meeting—in Geneva just before Christmas—should be productive and might permit the two sides to announce a date for a summit meeting at which Carter and Brezhnev could sign the agreement. Officials in Washington and Moscow began to make tentative plans for a summit in mid January.